595[b] [882] If the whole family [26] suffers through the misbehaviour of adolescents, the latter will not be spared by the father. But the mother will often take their sides for, not belonging to her husband's family, she allows only her heart to speak. The familial-political organization of this people requires that fondness have its limits; otherwise it could lead to disorder and anarchy.

595[h] 855 It cannot be said of Nkundó parents, as one often reads about other peoples of the Congo, that they do not care for their children, who are self-sufficient and obliged to provide for their own needs from the age of six or seven. Our people are always feeding and even coddling their children; even when the latter are married they are always well received in their parents' home and lavishly treated. It is quite true that the young people spend much time in the forest looking for various kinds of food, but that is part of their games and amusements, a phase of their education, and at the same time their contribution to the maintenance of the household (a contribution which cannot be omitted from any serious education, and it is regrettable that it should be omitted by so many European families. (1)

1. Education will be dealt with more extensively in Chapter X, Article VIII.

595[c] 581 In the matter of marriage parents generally respect the feelings of their children. A father who is motivated by avarice and, above all, by the need for a certain sum of money or its equivalent, may sometimes let the voice of self-interest predominate over that of the heart.

It goes without saying that one may encounter aberrations of fatherly feeling, but such cases are exceedingly rare. (2)

2. For an example see Chapter II, Article XI, 3, B.

595[e] Though parents love their children without distinction and without consideration of their faults, vices, etc., they are not exempt from a certain amount of partiality: a particular child [27] will

548 ornaments or objects for her toilette (hairpins, for example), and it is probable therefore that individual cases of this sort occurred. But it is altogether unlikely that the practice was widespread, as it does not fit in with the economic organization of this people, among whom wealth is more or less collectively owned and, moreover, (as will be shown in Chapter VI, Article II) a woman has no property rights. [72] Therefore we can assume that there were only a few occasional prostitutes.

On the other hand, there have never been any professional prostitutes; that is, Nkundó women have never made a job out of prostitution, and the same thing may be said of the other forms listed above.

The number of prostitutes was necessarily limited, however, by the fact that the great majority of women were always married young (Chapter IV, Article I), and that adultery was severely punished (Chapter VI, Article VII).

Nevertheless, there is something which superficially resembles prostitution; that is, there is a category of girls and women whom at first glance one would be tempted to call prostitutes. Therefore it would be useful to examine the situation somewhat more closely, for though in itself it is entirely different from prostitution, it could easily lend itself to it.

549 552 602 It sometimes happens that a girl, besides the bolɔmbɛ (a socio-political institution in no way related to the degeneration of female sexuality), is kept in the home of her parents beyond the customary age before she is given in marriage. Such a girl is called ɛtɔtwɔ̂lia, "the one who does not marry." She is not bolɔmbɛ. Externally or -- to use philosophical terminology -- materially, the two customs resemble each other; but formally they are entirely different. Creating a bolɔmbɛ involves authority and influence and is thus a public matter. Whether a girl becomes an ɛtɔtwɔ̂lia, on the other hand, is a private matter between father and daughter. While the creation of a bolɔmbɛ is accompanied by public feasts and a decree officially proclaimed (bɔ̂lɔ) by the father and accepted by the council of family heads [73], the establishment of a ɛtɔtwɔ̂lia involves no official act or ceremony.

The name <u>ofitswâfia</u> does not mean that the girl will stay single all her life. Her marriage is not permanently excluded; it is only postponed.

As for her behaviour, the <u>ofitswâfia</u> conducts herself like any Nkundó girl. Nothing distinguishes her from her companions. If a good match is proposed to her, she marries like everyone else.

This custom -- if one can use the term -- therefore has no real connection with prostitution. All that can be said is that the girl who stays single longer and until adulthood, is exposed to more libertinism and a life of debauchery.

It also happens that parents who are angry because their daughter has dissolved a marriage to a man they consider a good son-in-law prevent her from remarrying in an effort to make her return to her legitimate husband. If the parents and their child each hold to their viewpoint without yielding, such a situation can go on for many months until the wife is -- practically speaking -- no longer under the authority of her husband. And since the opposition of her parents prevents her from being married by another man, she easily comes to give herself to all. It should be added that at present this case is chiefly hypothetical. Parents no longer have the authority to thwart the desires of an adult daughter in this way. If she is stubborn they have to yield out of fear that she will run far away. And that would be to go from the frying pan into the fire. But in the past the kind of situation I have described was not unusual.

The most fertile places for the breeding and development of prostitution are to be sought in the centers. The following principal causes can be given:

1) Female vanity is overexcited by the sight [74] of all the dazzling riches which have been imported by white men and which are such a temptation to Negro women. It requires a considerable income to satisfy this desire to enhance one's native beauty. Ordinary laborers and artisans do not earn enough money to satisfy their wives or daughters in this respect. Mistresses of Europeans or of foreign black men, the wives of "clerks" and other representatives of Negro high society display a degree of luxury startling and striking to the rest.

legitimate husband and is entitled to his wife. Everything depends on his personal attitude, his passion, or his respect for the body of his young wife. If he is reasonable he will be very careful during his relations with her or will abstain altogether, so as not to "damage" her body. But from the legal standpoint he may do as he chooses. Thus there are adults who have regular relations -- one way or another -- with a wife whose breasts are not in the least developed. In such cases marital relations take place before nubility. (1) The

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1. Note that the immature girl is not called *lilingo* in Nkundó, as Engels ("Les Wangata," *Revue congolaise*, 1910, p. 38) maintains. This word is but the Nkundó transformation of the word *virgo*. There is no specific term for "prepubescent." A girl who is not yet a woman but is no longer a child is called *nembeleke*.

consequences with respect to the birth rate may easily be guessed. [233] It may also happen that the husband himself has not reached puberty. This fact presents no obstacle to cohabitation. As soon as he feels that he is a man, he builds his hut and the couple live there together. In all these cases the girl often goes to her parents' home, and sometimes her visits extend for weeks during which she does not see her husband.

Formerly things did not work out in this fashion. The young wife often refused to participate in the sexual act, especially if the husband was considerably older than she. Her reaction was due to her natural modesty and timidity, together with her education. A polygamous husband usually respected her feelings, till she gradually came around. When her normal physiological development was completed and her love reached a sufficient intensity, she would begin to follow her instincts. In the light of what was said in Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 2, A, we may readily accept our informants' statements on this score; the situation seems altogether natural.

882 When the children reach puberty, they no longer like to sleep in their parent's home. The parents do not send them away, but on the other hand, they do not oppose this desire on the part of young people which, they say, springs from a feeling of modesty. The boys go one way, the girls another; for example, they may appropriate an unoccupied hut belonging to their father or go to close relatives, or they may try and find a place in quarters occupied by a group of boys or girls. If no house is available, the boys band together to build a hut which they share. Nowadays they begin very early [510] to build individual huts or one for two, in order to thus enjoy a greater freedom.

883 On the trees in the forest one finds a kind of hard mushroom called lonkitsela. When a child begins to speak, the mushroom is placed between his teeth, so that he will bite into it and thus learn not to express himself thoughtlessly but to hold back his words (-sikitela) and think before speaking.

One can often observe parents and other persons actively helping children to express themselves correctly, especially in correcting mistakes, pronunciation, and errors with regard to proper nouns, by giving them the proper words and even explaining grammatical forms and subtle distinctions between certain terms. "This is how it must be said; that means something else. This plant is called thus and so, etc."

884 Therefore, although a Nkundó child is very free to spend his days as he pleases and, perforce, learns many things through personal experience, it would be wrong to say that his parents are not interested in his education and do not contribute to it. They participate actively by their advice, their explanations, and their demonstrations. Needless to say, their role is neither as important nor as continuous as in many civilized societies. Besides it is very difficult, and often unfair, to compare our people's situation with that of Europeans; the difference in circumstances is too great. But we must point out in all fairness that the Nkundó do make efforts in this realm, although the results are hardly apparent with respect to moral education (1), because there are many flaws, gaps,

1. We will say no more about material and economic education, which can not be criticized.